

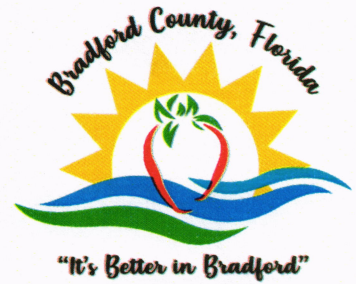
# BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING MINUTES

April 22, 2019

Charley E. Johns Conference Center  
1610 North Temple Avenue  
Starke, FL 32091

Workshop – County Fire Department  
6:30 p.m.

---



**PRESENT:** Commissioner District 5 Chairman Frank Durrance  
Commissioner District 3 Vice-Chairman Chris Dougherty  
Commissioner District 1 Commissioner Ross Chandler  
Commissioner District 2 Commissioner Kenny Thompson  
Commissioner District 4 Commissioner Danny Riddick

**ALSO PRESENT:** Brad Carter, County Manager; Rachel Rhoden, Deputy County Manager; Will Sexton, County Attorney; Ray Norman, Clerk of Courts; Marlene Stafford, Deputy Clerk; Jim Farrell, Finance Director; Lisa Hall, Finance Clerk; Benji Bennett, Fire Department; Dean Bennett, Facility Maintenance Director; Tyler Roddenberry, I.T. Manager; Ian Waters, Technical Systems Administrator; Ben Riggs, I.T. Support Specialist; Allen Parrish, Emergency Medical Services Director; Major Smith; Lt. Shuford; Sheriff Smith; Teresa Phillips, Tax Collector; and Wendy Russell, Deputy Emergency Management Director.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Durrance called the workshop to order at 6:30 p.m.

---

Chairman Durrance expressed appreciation to the I.T. Department for the installation of the new audio/visual system.

## 1. DISCUSSION OF COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Chairman Durrance introduced Ms. Susan Schell, Safety Program Manager at the Bureau of Fire Standards and Training (State Fire Marshal's Office). Ms. Schell reviewed the basic requirements dictated by state statutes and codes regarding firefighters. Her review was not limited to but included:

- Regulations and protocols to legally fight and extinguish fires.
- Certification requirements and continued training requirements.
- Dangers of and penalties for violating the regulations and protocols.

Ms. Schell concluded by stating that the laws and regulations were not imposed to prohibit volunteer fire departments, but to protect those who serve.



**Commissioners' Comments:**

**Commissioner Riddick presented comments:**

- Gave a brief summary of how the county reached this point.
- Addressed false information and innuendo that circulated about former Chief Ware and expressed his disappointment for the loss of Mr. Ware and the numerous firefighters that have also resigned.
- Mr. Ware's plan for improving the Fire Department.
- The proposed fire assessment. Offered an apology for not presenting the proposal clearly.

**Commissioner Chandler presented comments:**

- Addressed false accusations and lack of communication.
- Apologized for the Commissions' failure to adequately communicate to the public.

**Vice-Chairman Dougherty presented comments:**

- The proposed fire assessment and the fact that the Board did not have a chance to discuss the proposal to thwart any misconceptions or to regroup.
- The decline in volunteerism in the last two years; what caused the decline and how to improve it.
- Improving the Fire Department progressively instead of developing a monumental Fire Department.
- Examining cut backs (county-wide) to help fund the Fire Department.
- Hybrid fire system.
- \$25.00 per household, per year fire assessment. \$75.00 flat rate per business, per year fire assessment. (These figures were used hypothetically for discussion purposes only.)
- Capital Improvement Plan.

**Commissioner Thompson presented comments:**

- His disapproval of the amount of the proposed fire assessment.
- His belief that a fire assessment should be decided by the people and not imposed by the Commission.
- Rebuilding volunteerism and certifications.

Chairman Durrance asked those fire fighters present who are Firefighter I or higher and willing to serve as a volunteer to stand; two firefighters responded.



**Chairman Durrance presented comments:**

- His disapproval of the amount of the proposed fire assessment.
- The cost to provide services.
- Examining the current budget to locate funds to transfer to the Fire Department.
- Consolidation (City of Starke).
- Hybrid fire system.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS ([Forms](#)):**

Upon the Chairman's call for citizens wishing to be heard on the matter, the following individuals appeared and stated their comments and concerns:

**Ed Montaigne**  
**Jeanie Montaigne**  
**Percy Sullivan**  
**Daniel Cook**  
**Bobby Brown**  
**Charles McKinney**  
**Billy Rehberg**  
**David Rogers**  
**Bartow Lee**

**Michael Brown**  
**Mitchell Gunter**  
**Paul Still**  
**Joey Dampier**  
**Tommy Tatum**  
**Edward Siegmund**  
**Paul McDavid**  
**Sharon Clements**  
**Nancy Germano**

**John Robinson**  
**Paul McKinney**  
**Sylvia Tatum**  
**Harold Hill**  
**Gary Faircloth**  
**Mark Williams**  
**Adam Hudson**

**3. CLOSING STATEMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS:**

**Commissioner Chandler** expressed appreciation to all who attended the workshop. He vowed to do his best on the Board and do whatever needs to be done to get the department settled to ultimately serve the citizens of Bradford County.

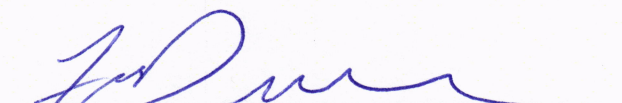
**Commissioner Riddick** expressed appreciation to Chip Ware, J.F. Miller and Benji Bennett. In order to get the Fire Department back on track, the Board should take steps to get Chip Ware and J.F. Miller to return.

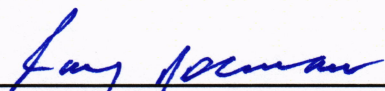
**Vice-Chairman Dougherty** stated that the immediate task at hand is to figure out how to manage the department right now, to get someone in place who will maintain an adequate level of volunteerism and then develop a program to move forward with a hybrid system to provide fire service to the citizens of Bradford County. He re-addressed his earlier comment of collecting the hypothetical figure of \$25.00 per household per year (\$75.00 flat rate per year for businesses). Over a three-year period, there would be enough money to get the department off the ground.

**Chairman Durrance** expressed appreciation for the comments and input presented. He concurred with Vice-Chairman Dougherty in that the Board has the responsibility to figure out how to manage the Fire Department.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
BRADFORD COUNTY, FLORIDA**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**FRANK DURRANCE, CHAIRMAN**

**ATTEST:**   
\_\_\_\_\_  
**RAY NORMAN, CLERK TO THE BOARD**

Minutes prepared by Marlene Stafford, Deputy Clerk

**Minutes approved by BOCC at the Regular Scheduled Meeting of** 06-03-19